



FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, PO Box 1305
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Autumn Edition, May 2021

<https://fhs.org.au>



Kings Square 1957

FHC ref. LH 0543



Kings Square 2021

City of Fremantle

KINGS SQUARE RENAMING

The Fremantle History Society recently made a submission to the City of Fremantle in relation to the proposed renaming of Kings Square. A summary was prepared with a much fuller paper attached. The summary is presented here.

The Fremantle History Society supports the retention of the name Kings Square but encourages the City of Fremantle to consider a range of interpretive programs in Kings Square and across the whole Fremantle/Walyalup area, in close consultation with Whadjuk Noongar cultural custodians, which helps to strengthen all the cultural heritage values of our shared history.

Recognising and celebrating the layers of our past are fundamental to good heritage practice and to the nurturing of a strong, respectful resilient community. This requires an holistic approach which considers a broad range of views and will involve a multi-faceted program for the whole of the Fremantle/ Walyalup area to conserve and interpret its rich heritage values.

Conveying the length and strength of the Whadjuk people's connection to the land should be the starting point or basis for all discussions about how to best conserve and interpret the sum of the natural and cultural heritage values attributed to Fremantle. Superficial gestures (no matter how well meaning) are unlikely to foster either the intended public awareness or the type of engagement that will lead to a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture and connection to the place that the proposed re-naming of Kings Square intends. Neither do they reflect a commitment to good heritage practice which the City of Fremantle (and the Fremantle History Society) aspire to.

Kings Square is a central element in the JS Roe's 1833 town plan of Fremantle illustrating his understanding of the latest innovative thinking in urban design at the time by responding to the topography of the place rather than imposing a grid plan on the landscape. The naming of adjacent streets also reflects the origins and timing of the settlement. This should not be lost.

Simply renaming Kings Square with the name of a prominent Whadjuk person of that period does not acknowledge in a meaningful way the Whadjuk people as the traditional owners of the greater Fremantle/Walyalup area. It is therefore unlikely to significantly increase in the community's knowledge of the Whadjuk people's connection with the greater Fremantle/Walyalup area.

Working with local Noongar cultural custodians to develop a range of interpretive programs, which may also include elements within Kings Square such as indigenous plantings as well as the wider Fremantle/Walyalup area, will have much stronger, richer legacy.

One such way could be reinforcing the strong correlation between Fremantle's topography and its urban form. This provides an opportunity for a multi-layered reading of the co-existing heritage values that helps in defining the identity of Fremantle. Topographical features and other natural landmark elements that had a recognised Noongar name are well suited to renaming or dual naming. Public art, public programs and events, commitment to inclusivity in consultation and planning and interpretive material in the forms of signage, publications and the like are further examples. Importantly these need to be planned, interlinked programs which are developed in conjunction with cultural custodians.

If a dual naming approach is taken, names such as Walyalup Koort (Heart) meaning a place in the heart of Fremantle or the variation, Walyalup Karlup meaning Fremantle heart-country / home is indicative of what this place is but would have to be agreed to by Whadjuk Noongar Elders and Traditional Owners.

The full paper on the naming of Kings Square is available on the Fremantle History Society's website: <https://fhs.org.au/2021/05/05/naming-of-kings-square/>

MEETING REPORTS

Woodman Point – February

The first meeting for 2021 was to the Woodman Point Quarantine Station; thankfully the day was warm and there was a good turn-out. We were lucky enough to have two dedicated and passionate members of the Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp as our guides for the afternoon, both with deep, personal connections to the area. Jenni Carder's grandfather, Bertie Poore, was senior nurse from 1923 till his retirement in 1957, and Neil Wilson's grandfather was Officer-in-Charge from 1939 till he retired in 1963.

Jenni and Neil walked us around the museum and the Quarantine Station describing its numerous buildings and their various functions, including the site of the disembarkation jetty, the shower block where patients bathed with Lysol soap while their clothes were decontaminated in the fumigation building next door, the quarantine wards which today serve as dormitories, the kitchen and the dining room with its interesting timber arches. Apparently the designer was originally a shipwright - the ceiling certainly looks like the inside of a boat!

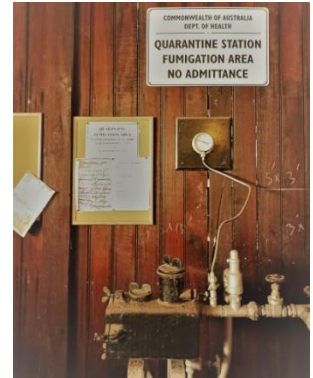


There were some fascinating stories - from the luck of the poor soldier, thought to have died and awaiting cremation but thankfully somebody spotted his hand moving, to the terrible sadness of the four young nurses who volunteered to care for the soldiers from the troopship Boonah and succumbed to the 'flu themselves.



Thanks to Jenni and Neil for a thoroughly entertaining and informative afternoon.

Photos from the Quarantine Station visit (FHS members)



Visit to the Round House - March



Inside the Round House (Pam Harris)

Our meeting at the Round House was organised for the beginning of the year so that we could be outside when the weather is mild. However, on the night of the visit there was an incredibly cold wind and we were all quite frozen by the end of the presentation by Gena Binet. A crowd of around 25 people attended to hear Gena's presentation about the conservation of the Round House. Gena is the Heritage Coordinator at the City of Fremantle and presented an interesting talk about the conservation history of the Round House and how erosion and various conservation practices over the years had led to its present condition which has led to the need of major conservation works.

The work is being completed in stages as time and funding permits. The information about the geology of the site was really relevant to the problems regarding conservation and helped in an understanding of the various problems faced in the conservation of heritage buildings. It also illustrated the degree of knowledge required to ensure that the works are completed using best practice to ensure the ongoing conservation of heritage buildings.

Later we gathered at the Gunner's Cottage, home for the Fremantle Volunteer Heritage Guides, to enjoy some food and drinks and the sheltered spot was welcomed by those who attended. Many thanks to Gena for her time and contribution to the history of the building. Also thanks to the heritage volunteers for hosting the meeting. We all enjoyed viewing the new interpretation relating to the Round House now on display at the Gunner's Cottage.

Fremantle Beerpourium – May

The Fremantle History Society hosted an Australian Heritage Week event titled Adaptive Re-Use at the Evan Davies Building on South Terrace, a fitting venue for the topic. Originally booked for Tuesday 27 April, due to Covid lockdown it was postponed until Tuesday 4 May. Attendees who braved the wet autumn weather were rewarded with interesting stories, wood fired pizzas and drinks of their choice.

The Evan Davies Building is an elegant piece of architecture, originally designed as the Literary Institute opened in 1899. In the late 19th century literary institutes were cropping up in Australian cities as a demonstration of colonial sophistication. Temperance groups also encouraged them as alternatives to hotels. The operation of literary institutes was a little

different from the libraries of today, insomuch as patrons went to a desk and enquired about a topic and were given a book or manuscript and directed to a desk to read it. On leaving the document was returned to the 'librarian'. Sir Edmund Barry changed that by funding the State Library of Victoria in 1854, this library would be familiar to library users today, members could not only choose their books for themselves; they could also take them away with them.

In 1956 Fremantle Council decided, at the encouragement of Cr. Evan Davies, to open a library at the Literary Institute building. In honour of his work the library was named the Evan Davies Library. The Literary Institute occupied the first floor, with shops at the street front. However, it is unclear where the library operated from, some reports say the library was also on the first floor, but accounts and images suggest it also occupied the ground floor. Any readers who can throw some light on this would be most welcome to comment.

Committee members Alan Kelsall and Jon Strachan showed pictures and talked of the various uses the building had hosted. The building has changed little since its construction, the main changes being the verandahs. As built it had a single storey verandah at street level which was removed around 1905 and replaced with a grand double storey verandah. More recently an excellent renovation included the reconstruction of the double storey verandah. Images from the Fremantle History Centre showed a very well-ordered library, including a children's section.



Jon Strachan addressing the meeting (Anne Brake)

The upper level, now occupied by Beerpourium has had two other main tenants since the change from being a library. In 1963 the Harbour Theatre formed under the enthusiastic guidance of Jimmy Quinn, an experienced director of the Perth Repertory Club. They put on many seasons of plays in a very professional way, often with elaborate stage settings. One was never sure what would await one as you ascended the grand staircase from South Terrace, though you could be sure of the offer of a glass of sherry or port during the interval. Unfortunately, Harbour Theatre was unable to furnish an increased rent and moved to the old Port Cinema on Adelaide Street.

Kulcha Multicultural Arts moved into the upstairs space in 1983, after a short stint at the North Perth Ethnic Music Centre. Kulcha was dedicated to presenting, promoting and developing multicultural arts in WA and their role was primarily to support Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people who wanted to pursue a career in music and entertainment. The support was through advocacy, providing performance space as well as artists management services.

Implicit in that mentorship was to provide high quality events for people to perform at, the OZ Concert was a case in point. Initially Kulcha took on the role to allow CALD performers to contribute to an event. Earlier concerts had involved a collection of ethnic groups putting on traditional folk dances and songs which under Kulcha's guiding hand was transformed from a grass roots event to highly professional award-winning event, televised on SBS from Government House Gardens.

There was a sad irony in Kulcha receiving an award from the Office of Multicultural Interests and ABAF as they were winding up the business. Kulcha was declared insolvent in 2014, 30

years after it started its work. No mention of multicultural arts would be complete without the mention of Mark Cain, as a still tireless worker in this field.

Beerpourium owner and our host for the night Scott Jones gave a talk on his work and transforming of the space into Beerpourium. Covid restrictions and lockdowns have not been kind to hospitality businesses.

The formal part of the night was concluded by Anne Brake announcing the sponsorship opportunities for the Ron and Dianne Davidson Scholarship.

The crowd then enjoyed drinks over the bar and a selection of pizzas, and of course a chance for a good old chat. It was good to welcome Cr Jenny Archibald and Council Heritage Officer Gina Binet to the event. We also welcomed two new members Mattie and Jack Turnbull, who signed up on the night, so they must have enjoyed themselves!



COMING EVENTS

FREMANTLE PILOTS

Fremantle Buffalo Club
54 High Street, Fremantle
25 May 6.00 pm

Our guest speaker is Stuart Proctor, Managing Director of Fremantle Pilots. Stuart will talk about their history and the role the pilots have played in Fremantle's rich shipping past.

The talk will be followed by supper and, as the Buffalo Club is a licensed facility, drinks can be purchased at the bar. We have been told that parking is free in High Street after 6.00 pm. We look forward to seeing you there.

NORTH FREMANTLE'S AMALGAMATION

North Fremantle Town Hall
222 Queen Victoria Street, North Fremantle
29 June 6.00 pm

Our June meeting will be held in the library section of the iconic North Fremantle Town Hall known as the Guild Hall and adjacent to Matilda's Antique Centre. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the merger of North Fremantle Council with the City of Fremantle. Ann Forma will give a talk on the history of the Town Hall and the municipality of North Fremantle. Ann is a long-term North Fremantle resident, former North Ward Councillor and has been involved with the North Fremantle community for over 40 years.

Following her talk we will be given the opportunity to have a look around the interior of the building, after which we will have our regular light supper.

DECKCHAIR AND VICTORIA HALL (AGM)

Victoria Hall
179 High Street, Fremantle
27 July 6.00 pm

This year's AGM will be followed by the opportunity to buy a piece of Fremantle's history/heritage and/or a book or two for edification or just plain enjoyment. Cathy Hall, a long-time member of the Deckchair Theatre Board and force behind the work to conserve and then find a home for the company's archive, will give a short talk about Deckchair and the posters used to advertise their shows. There are a number of these mounted posters remaining and

these will be put up for silent auction across the night. We have also been lucky enough to receive a number of books through the Royal WA Historical Society's recent book sale which will be available for sale – some excellent bargains to be found



THE RON AND DIANNE DAVIDSON HISTORY SCHOLARSHIP

The Fremantle History Society is inviting you to contribute to the Ron and Dianne Davidson History Scholarship.

Recently renamed to honour Ron and Dianne's long term passion for and commitment to Fremantle's history and heritage, the scholarship is helping create an important legacy for the future through building an understanding of the rich and diverse history of this significant place, known to Whadjuk Noongars as Walyalup.

We will soon be calling for applications for the biennial \$2000 scholarship which aims to foster new, high quality research with a focus on the history and heritage of Fremantle. Where appropriate, the piece will be published in the relevant edition of the award-winning Fremantle Studies Journal.

Be part of Fremantle's future by supporting an understanding of the past. You can be part of this legacy by giving a donation.

Any amount will help to support the scholarship.

Payment can be made by cheque or directly to our bank account.

Post to - Fremantle History Society, PO Box 1305, Fremantle 6959

Deposit at - BSB: 126 568, Account No: 43329120. Reference: R&D Davidson Scholarship



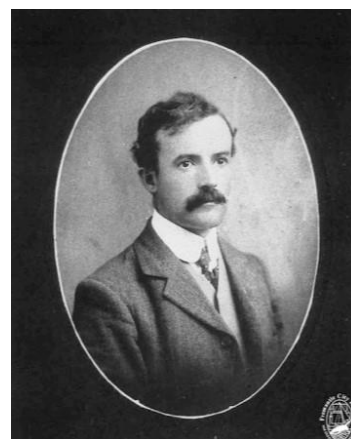
FREMANTLE HISTORY CENTRE

Heather Campbell and Stewart Alger

White Gum Valley Primary School - *'an outpost in the battle against ignorance'*¹

In March 1899 it was noted that increased school accommodation was required in the district. The Inspector-General of Schools, Cyril Jackson, visited White Gum Valley and came to the conclusion that a school was necessary; it would be built 'when funds are available'².

In April 1900, 'Fremantle (White Gum Valley), town lots 1301 to 1313 inclusive', were set aside for a school-site³ and in October the Public Works Department called for tenders⁴. The successful tender by W T H Parsons to build the school for £703 10s was announced in early December⁵. Obviously a man of action, Mr Parsons advertised for three carpenters, in mid-December 1900 and by February 1901 for a '[l]abourer, good ... used to sinking post holes'⁶. The White Gum Valley School was listed in the *Government Gazette* and the newspapers as a polling place for the election on Friday 29 March, to elect the inaugural members of the Federal Parliament, and



(Horace) Harry C Thomas 1903
FHC ref 999

¹ W J Hickey, MLC at the official opening ceremony of the new White Gum Valley School 1926.

² *West Australian* 8 March 1900, p 4 and *Umpire* 10 March 1900, p 2.

³ *Daily News* 21 April 1900, p 4.

⁴ *West Australian* 30 Oct 1900, p 2.

⁵ *West Australian* 1 December 1900, p 4.

⁶ *West Australian* 18 December 1900, p 8 and 12 February 1901, p 8.

also a few weeks later for the WA State election on 24 April. The opening of the school took place 15 April 1901⁷, sandwiched between these two events.

Two rooms built of wood were considered sufficient⁸ and the first head-teacher was Mr H Thomas. Mr Thomas was an exceptional teacher. A tribute to him in *The WA Teachers Journal* after his death, aged 57, was quoted in the *Northam Advertiser* of October 1933⁹.

He had a '*sturdy independence of character ... [and] to the thousands of children who profited by his talents as a teacher, his sympathy as a headmaster, and his comradely nature as a man, he will long remain a wool of inspiration woven into the fabric of their daily lives*'.



White Gum Valley School 1904-1906 winners of the Governor's Shield and Girls Flag competitions, State Schools Athletic Association, FHC ref 1000

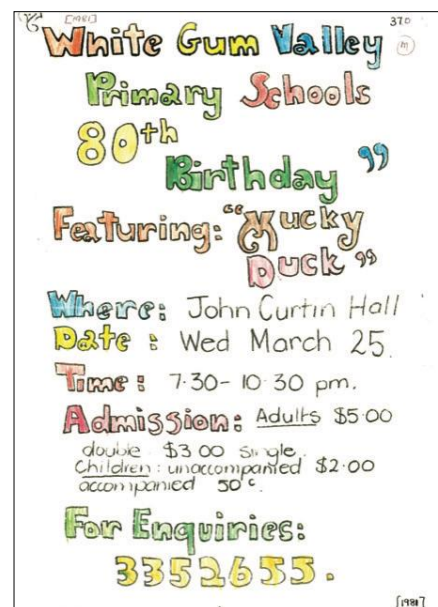
The children of those early years 'distinguished themselves' winning the Shield for Physical Culture in competition with all metro and suburban schools 1904-1906.

A new school was opened in White Gum Valley in 1926 'for which the residents had been fighting for many years'. It was a 'gala day' after which an adjournment was made to the old

school building for refreshments. Mr. McCallum [Minister for Works] announced that the Parents' Association would retain the old school's two large rooms, for a local hall, allowing it to live on¹⁰.

It is obvious from the extensive and varied records held at the FHC that the school has always been proud of its history and has regularly celebrated important milestones.

On behalf of the Fremantle History Society and the Fremantle Library's Local History Collection best wishes to White Gum Valley Primary School in this its 120th year!!



Poster celebrating White Gum Valley PS's 80th birthday.
FHC ref 370 Schools, White Gum Valley Primary School to 1980.



ARNOTT, MILLS AND WARE

Jon Strachan

I still remember the sweet smell carried on the sea breeze to our home on South Terrace of fresh baked biscuits from the Arnott, Mills & Ware factory on the corner of Jenkins Street. The street was named after the Rev JG Jenkin from the South Fremantle Methodist Church and

⁷ Letter Mrs Anne Klemm to The Librarian, Fremantle Library, undated, held by FHC Ref 370 Schools, White Gum Valley Primary School to 1980.

⁸ *Advertiser* 23 April 1926, p 4.

⁹ *Northam Advertiser* 4 October 1933, p 2.

¹⁰ *Advertiser* 23 April 1926, p 4

before that it had the romantic name of By-the-Sea Road. That was back in the 1980's before the factory closed in 1992 and was converted into apartments in 1995.

Mills & Ware started out in 1898 in Cottesloe, but due to their popularity moved to larger premises in South Fremantle only a year later. The war years were good to them, manufacturing biscuits for the troop's rations. Arnott's became a shareholder in 1953 and majority shareholder in 1973.



Mills and Ware, 1992 (FHC ref 3258)

There has been a lot written about the factory, including a Deckchair Theatre play called *Factory Girls*, performed in the Jenkins Street Factory. Ann Delroy and Phyl Brown published a paper in the 1999 Fremantle History Society's Studies Journal entitled '*Sugar and spice: changing patterns of women's work in a WA cake and biscuit factory*', which reveals that at the time of closing in 1992 Arnott, Mills and Ware's workforce was 90% women, of which 75% were born overseas, resulting in 14 languages being spoken in the factory.

It was due to the large number of migrant women at the factory that The Meeting Place was opened across the street on South Terrace to offer support and a sense of community for many of them. The Meeting Place is still a thriving community centre today run by City of Fremantle.

The Biscuit Factory workers are also celebrated through interviews on a YouTube video at; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JO5NvMxIRE>

The story goes that Ross Arnott enjoyed a punt on the horses and in 1958 he attended the Kentucky Derby having some success on the winning horse. Six years later he wanted to recreate that luck with a new line of biscuits he was planning, so named them after the winning horse. He must have been delighted at the continuing popularity of Tim Tams.

The street level of the old converted factory houses several small businesses and a large corner restaurant under several owners. It is currently the very successful Copper Chimney Indian Restaurant and we now have very different aromas wafting up South Terrace on the sea breeze.



FAY'S FREMANTLE of the 1940's

Fay Campbell

Fay's memories of growing up in Fremantle have appeared in previous newsletters. They continue here.

A lot of services were home delivered like the ice man who came with his horse and cart and would carry a huge block of ice on his shoulders which had a bag on it to absorb the water. He would give us little bits of ice which we would then rub on the rump of his horse who would kick profusely. Then the ice man would yell at us kids.

The baker came around with his horse and cart and I can still see all these women in our street picking over the different types of bread with their hands and smelling the loaves which we all then ate – but we were never sick!

The green grocer and Mr. Sgro, the wine merchant from Oceanic Trading Exchange in Arundel Street also came by.



Pellews. Adelaide St. c1914 (FHC ref 0142)

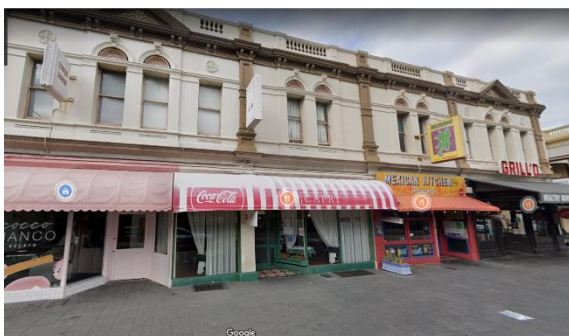
Nanna loved the movies so we always went once a week to either Hoyts or Princess Theatre in the afternoon. On the way home we would call into Pellews, Fisher Beards, Inkpens, Kalazoic, Bousfields, Ezywalkins, Barney Silbert's, Clarkson Hardware, Warrens Menswear, Urquharts, Rees Pharmacy and CH May the Jewellers. Of course we always had a peek at the photographers' showcases of Orloff, Peterson and Mercia Glyn to see who had got married.

My first dental appointment was at Braham Bros upstairs and opposite where Warrens Menswear is now. My favourite store was Rowley Goonan's in Market St between High St and South Terrace. One side of the shop window was all toys and there was always a bride doll in the window. I would press my face up to the glass and dream of the day when I would have one, but my dream never did eventuate. Well we were all poor in those days but we never realised it. We were just happy.

Tinny Thomas' ginger beer was not a favourite of Nanna's so I never got one, but across the road in South Terrace was, and still is, Capri Café which is now run by the original owner's granddaughter. And I believe the food is still great.



21 South Tce – The Capri 1985 (FHC ref E000258)



21 South Terrace 2020 (Google Maps)

Where Time Zone is now, used to be Howard Porter Motors who were also prominent in the racing industry. Where Hungry Jack's now stands was a woodyard in the 1940s and early 1950s. It then became a used car dealership.

The Evan Davies Civic Library was on the strip where the ice cream shop now stands next to Dome. Silver Top taxi rank was in Market St.

The coffee shop on the corner of Bannister and Market Streets was where Arthur E Davies, Undertakers were. They were the same family who built their first home in South St, Beaconsfield where the yoga centre is now.

My last three shopping errands were to the bootmaker which is where Pizza Bella Roma now stands, the butcher shop next door and then the next door to him was Luisini Menswear. I remember being with Nanna and buying socks and a cardigan for Grandad.

Thanks to Fay for sharing these wonderful memories and giving us a glimpse of Fremantle as it used to be.

If there are any other members out there who would like to share their stories, please get writing and send them in to us.



FHS LOGO



It has been brought up that the Fremantle History Society logo, with us faithfully for such a long time now, could possibly be due for review. It is looking a little tired and dated, has been given a facelift recently but even so, does it actually represent the society and what it stands for? Does looking at it immediately make you think – Ah, historic Fremantle? There are so many architectural icons out there – the Town Hall, Arts Centre, Fremantle Prison to name a few. Would one of these suit better?

We'd like to hear what you - the members, think. Are you happy with what we have now or would you like to see it changed? If so, to what? You may have some design ideas of your own.

Please send us your thoughts: secretary.fhs@gmail.com

FOR YOUR DIARY

May Tuesday 25th, 6.00 pm

Fremantle Pilots

Fremantle Buffalo Club, 54 High Street, Fremantle

June Tuesday 29th, 6.00 pm

North Fremantle's Amalgamation

North Fremantle Town Hall, 222 Queen Victoria Street, North Fremantle

July Tuesday 27th, 6.00 pm

AGM - Deckchair poster auction and book sale

Victoria Hall, 179 High Street, Fremantle

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Allen Graham (President) 0412 933 360
Judith Robison (Vice Pres) 0434 571 666
Pam Harris (Secretary) 0408 092 100
Anne Brake (Treasurer) 0438 445 141

Committee Members:

Fay Campbell	0419 969 678
Jon Strachan	0417 901 809
Heather Campbell	0408 175 246
Tania Heyne	0419 197 116
Alan Kelsall	9336 4573

Ordinary meetings are generally held on the 4th Tuesday (or Sunday) of the month. Details of these meetings can be found in your newsletter. Be sure to check details as meeting days and times may vary.